

Seeing the bigger picture: Investigating tertiary Arts educators' views on the Australian Arts curriculum

Recent research proposes that arts based learning can offer a range of positive outcomes for all students (Bamford, 2006; Fiske, 1999). Unfortunately, the opportunities for arts based training and education for teachers, particularly in generalist Primary teacher courses are minimal, and therefore requires urgent attention (Gibson & Anderson, 2008). Garvis and Pendergast (2010) support this claim, stating that "it is assumed pre-service teachers exit teacher training with adequate arts content knowledge and skills" (p. 4), however, contend that in reality this is often not the case.

Welch (1995) argues that the way teachers' perceive themselves in regard to their own artistic abilities stems directly from the level of effectiveness they demonstrate as arts teachers. The ability however to transform disciplinary knowledge into a form of knowledge that is appropriate for students is a significant challenge for teachers (Garvis & Pendergast, 2010). The importance of teacher educator trainers in preparing pre-service teachers to see the 'bigger picture' is essential, particularly when curriculum change occurs.

This paper will provide a timely national snapshot view of tertiary arts educators' perceptions of the impending national arts curriculum and the level of their preparedness. A narrative inquiry approach will be taken to investigate the deeper, lived experiences of three tertiary art educators and their preparation for the implementation. Additional information will be sought from a survey of Australian arts educators and interviews from each state and territory to provide further insights into the impact of this initiative on the tertiary education sector.

References

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